

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY AF/W:TWMSMITH:LFS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 184138

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MR, US

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN

REF: (A) STATE 168;04, (B) STATE 157157

1. AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN OF MAURITANIA AND AF/W DIRECTOR HAD LENGTHY CONVERSATION ON US/MAURITANIA RELATIONS JULY 21. AT MEETING, WHICH WAS AT KOCHMAN'S INITIATIVE, HE RAISED THE REPLY TO PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S LETTER (REF B), THE POSSIBILITY OF A PRIVATE VISIT TO THE US BY OULD DADDAH'S WIFE, (REF A) THE RESULTS OF THE BA BOCAR ALPHA MISSION, AND KOCHMAN'S DESIRE TO STAGE A MAURITANIAN CULTURAL EXHIBITION IN THE US.

2. AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN DESCRIBED AT SOME LENGTH THE WARMTH OF HIS RECEPTION IN HIS INITIAL ROUND OF CALLS IN WASHINGTON. HE CLEARLY ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO THE FACT THAT, WHEN HE PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS, PRESIDENT FORD SPENT MORE TIME WITH HIM THAN HE HAD BEEN LED TO EXPECT. HE ASKED WHERE THE REPLY TO PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S LETTER

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STOOD. WE REPLIED THAT IT WAS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION

BY THE WHITE HOUSE. HE EMPHASIZED HIS HOPE THAT A REPLY COULD BE SIGNED BEFORE HE RETURNS TO MAURITANIA NEAR THE END OF JULY.

3. KOCHMAN SAID THAT BEFORE HE LEFT NOUAKCHOTT, PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S WIFE HAD ASKED HIM TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS IN SEPTEMBER. KOCHMAN EMPHASIZED THAT THE VISIT WOULD BE PURELY PRIVATE AND SUBSEQUENTLY SAID HE THOUGHT SHE WOULD COME ALONE. SHE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN SEEING THOSE PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES THAT ARE MOST LIKE MAURITANIA. KOCHMAN TOLD HER LARGE PARTS OF THE SOUTHWEST WERE SIMILAR TO MUCH OF MAURITANIA. SHE IS ALSO INTERESTED IN THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES AND WOULD ENJOY DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE AMERICANS. KOCHMAN SAID SHE SPEAKS WELL BUT HAS ONLY A LIMITED COMMAND OF ENGLISH. HE ASSUMED THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO ACCOMPANY HER ON ANY VISIT.

4. TURNING TO MAURITANIAN EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE US MILITARY EQUIPMENT, KOCHMAN SAID THAT HE ASSUMED THAT THE TRANSFER FROM JORDAN OF .30 CALIBER WEAPONS WAS PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY. WE CONFIRMED THIS. HE ASKED WHO WAS PAYING FOR THE SHIPMENT OF THESE WEAPONS FROM JORDAN TO MAURITANIA. WE SAID WE HAD TOLD JORDANIANS WE WOULD NOT. WITH REGARD TO THE BA MISSION KOCHMAN SAID THE PURCHASE OF UNIFORMS APPEARED TO PRESENT NO PROBLEM NOW THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND FRENCH SIZES HAD BEEN CLEARED UP. HE EXPECTED NO DIFFICULTIES WITH THE PURCHASE OF RADIOS. REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF VEHICLES, HE EXPRESSED SOME SURPRISE THAT A PRIVATE FIRM (NAPCO) COULD ADVISE AN EMBASSY REGARDING APPROACHES TO THE US GOVERNMENT. (NAPCO HAD ADVISED THE MAURITANIANS TO MAKE A FORMAL REQUEST FOR THE DIVERSION OF SOME JEEPS FROM THE US ARMY TO MAURITANIA.) WE REPLIED THAT FURTHER EXAMINATION HAD SHOWN IT PROBABLY WOULD BE QUICKER AND CHEAPER FOR THE MAURITANIANS TO BUY THE READILY AVAILABLE CIVILIAN MODEL OF THE JEEP RATHER THAN WAIT UNTIL THE MILITARY MODEL CAN BE MANUFACTURED EVEN THOUGH WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE LEAD TIME FOR MILITARY MODELS WAS ONLY SIX MONTHS. KOCHMAN COMMENTED

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THAT THE BA MISSION HAD BEEN MOUNTED IN GREAT HASTE OWING TO THE PRESSURE OF EVENTS, THAT THE MAURITANIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED OF IT, AND THAT IN ANY CASE IT HAD FINISHED ITS WORK BY THE TIME HE ARRIVED. HE EXPRESSED SOME SKEPTICISM ABOUT DR. BA'S APPOINTMENT BY NAPCO AS ITS AGENT IN MAURITANIA. HE ASKED IF IN THE FUTURE IT MIGHT NOT BE QUICKER AND CHEAPER TO APPROACH THE US GOVERNMENT DIRECTLY INSTEAD OF DEALING WITH A PRIVATE

US FIRM. WE AGREED TO ARRANGE A BRIEFING FOR HIM ON US GOVERNMENT PROCEDURES GOVERNING MILITARY SALES.

5. KOCHMAN CLEARLY HAS EXTENSIVE, IF HALF-FORMED PLANS REGARDING HIS MISSION TO THE US. AMONG THESE IS A

MAURITANIAN CULTURAL EXHIBITION IN ONE OR MORE US CITIES IN ORDER TO "PUT MAURITANIA ON THE MAP" AS FAR AS THE US IS CONCERNED. HE COMMENTED RATHER BITTERLY, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH HIS STAFF AND HIS RESOURCES WERE EXTREMELY LIMITED.

6. WE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE THE MAURITANIAN POSITION REGARDING PUERTO RICO AND KOREA AND THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF THESE TWO MATTERS AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT. WE OUTLINED THE US POSITION BRIEFLY ON EACH POINT. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED WITH THE US POSITION ON PUERTO RICO. WITH REGARD TO KOREA, HE SAID HE DOUBTED VERY STRONGLY THAT MAURITANIA WOULD DO ANYTHING TO SUPPORT NORTH KOREA IN VIEW OF ITS RELATIONS TOWARD THE SDAR.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE ANY BACKGROUND REGARDING THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE AND ANY DETAILS REGARDING HER DESIRES TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY. (BEARING IN MIND KOCHMAN'S STATEMENT TO ASST. SECY. SCHAUFLE (REF A) THAT POSSIBILITY OF SHIFTING VISIT TO "OFFICIAL" STATUS DISCUSSED ONLY WITH PRESIDENT AND MADAME OULD DADDAH.) WHILE WE DO NOT WISH TO RAISE ANY FALSE EXPECTATIONS REGARDING A VISIT WITH SUCH GENERAL OBJECTIVE, WE SHALL OF COURSE DO EVERYTHING APPROPRIATE TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS IF SHE SHOULD DECIDE TO COME.

ROBINSON
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